

**Rural Marketing and Distribution Network**

1365. SHRI R. SURENDER REDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to launch a major initiative in rural marketing and distribution network in the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the time by which it is likely to be finalised?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI UTTAMBHAI H. PATEL): (a) and (b). The Central Government in consultation with the States and UTs have identified 1700 blocks, most of which are in rural areas, to improve the reach of the Public Distribution System. The States/UTs have been advised to open around 11,000 additional Fair Price Shops (F.P.S.) to undertake distribution of key essential commodities. Besides, the F.P.S. could also be involved in the distribution of additional commodities of mass consumption such as gram, soaps, matchboxes, tea, exercise books etc.

In addition, the State Governments/UTs have been advised to bring as many markets as possible within the purview of regulation. The State Governments have also been advised to prepare Master Plans for development of rural markets and their integration with the main wholesale assembling markets.

**Growth Centres to Improve Non-farm Employment Opportunities**

1366. SHRI R. SURENDER REDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry has

urged the Union Government to speed up the implementation of growth centres to improve the non-farm employment opportunities;

(b) if so, the other suggestions made by FICCI in this regard; and

(c) the action proposed to be taken by the Union Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): (a) to (c). In a paper titled 'towards rural prosperity', the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry have referred to the need to support developmental activity in the non-farm sector of the rural areas by promoting the growth centre concept. Government have already selected 64 growth centres in consultation with the State Govts. Project reports in respect of 10 centres have already been approved for implementation. A sum of Rs. 15/- crores has been released to the approved centres.

*[Translation]*

**Setting up of New Factories in Bihar**

1367. SHRI LALIT ORAON: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government propose to set up a ball-bearing factory in Garhwa district of Bihar and a cement factory at Bhavanathpur in Bihar;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which construction of these factories is likely to commence?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Does not arise.